



# Iranian Drums

Adel Ardalan  
Presented in World PE Class  
Music Department, UW-Madison  
Nov. 2011

# Iranian Music

- As old as Elam culture (~2000-3000 B.C.)
- Some of the Iranian musicians:
  - Pre-Islam: Nakisa, Sarkash, Barbad
  - Post-Islam: Zaryab, Farabi, Avicenna
- Regional Musics:
  - Kurdish, Khorasani, Mazani, Azeri, Balouchi, etc.

An illustration of three Iranian musicians in traditional dress. On the left, a woman in a purple and green outfit plays a long, thin wind instrument. In the center, a woman in a red and yellow outfit plays a stringed instrument, possibly a kamancheh. On the right, a woman in a blue and orange outfit plays a stringed instrument, possibly a tar. They are all wearing ornate headpieces and jewelry.

# Iranian Music (Cont.)

- Radeef:
  - A collection of old melodies (based on folk music) preserved in an oral fashion.
    - 12 (13-1) tonal spaces (Dastgah)
    - Each tonal space with ~10-30 melodies (Gousheh)
  - Transcribed by Colonel Ali-Naqi Vaziri (~1960s)
- Improvisation is an essential part of the performances!

# Drums

- Tombak:
  - Goblet-shaped, single-headed drum
  - Mulberry wood + Sheep/Cow/Camel skin
  - The principal drum of Iranian music
- Daf:
  - Mainly a ceremonial instrument in Kurdistan (Iran/Iraq/Turkey)
  - Sheep/Goat skin + Mulberry wooden frame

# Drums (Cont.)

- Other Drums
  - Dayereh (Small Daf, with different techniques)
  - Dohol
  - Damam
  - Koozeh (Clay pot)
  - Naqara
  - Tas
  - Dosarkotan

# Iranian Music Rhythms

- Mostly based on the intrinsic rhythmic structure of the Iranian poems

- Iranian rhythmic cycles

— E.g. Abd al-Qadir Maraghi

- Related and influential systems:

— Indian

— North African

— Turkish

- Most common time signatures:

— 6/8, 2/4, 4/4, 5/8, 7/8, 16/8

— 13/8, more complex